

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action mailed February 25, 2008. Claims 1, 7, and 36 have been amended. Support for currently amended claims 1, 7, and 36 can be found throughout the specification as originally filed, for example, at page 3, lines 29-31. Claim 33 has been canceled. Claims 38-69 are withdrawn. Claims 1-32, and 34- 37 remain pending upon entry of the instant amendment.

No new matter has been added. Amendments and/or cancellation of the claims should in no way be construed as an acquiescence to any of the Examiner's objections and/or rejections. Amendments and/or cancellations of the claims are being made solely to expedite prosecution of the above-identified application. Applicants reserve the right to prosecute the same or similar claims in the present or another patent application. The amendments made are not related to any issues of patentability.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102/§103(a)

Van den Brom et al. (USPN 5,719,111)

The Office Action has rejected claims 1-9, 11, 13, 15-17, 21, 22, 27-37 under 35 U.S.C. §102/§103(a) over Van den Brom et al. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Van den Brom et al. discloses a block of *compressed* granular material that comprises a granulated builder material, an alkaline agent and a compressing aid. *See* abstract. Van den Brom et al. discloses that the granulated builder material is mixed with the other components, including the compressing aid, and is compressed in a mould under pressure. *See* col. 3, lines 55-60. Van den Brom et al. also discloses that, preferably, "more than one compaction cycle is applied in order to maximize the block density and quality." *See* col. 3, lines 65-67.

Applicants respectfully submit that Van den Brom et al. does not anticipate the currently claimed invention. Van den Brom et al. does not disclose a solid binding agent *consisting of* MGDA and water. The compositions of Van den Brom et al. comprise a granulated material that comprises a non-phosphate builder and a co-ingredient, wherein the co-ingredient is selected from polycarboxylic polymer solutions, alkali metal silicate solutions and mixtures thereof. *See* Col. 3, lines 10-15 of Van den Brom. The compositions of Van den Brom et al. also require a compressing aid to form the detergent block. The presently claimed compositions do not require a co-ingredient or a compressing aid, as disclosed by Van den Brom et al., to form a solid composition, as the solid binding agent of the present invention is formed from water and MGDA. Thus, Applicants submit that Van den Brom et al. does not teach each feature of the presently claimed invention.

Applicants also respectfully submit that disclosure in Van den Brom et al. of drying the builder material in a fluid bed to a free moisture content of less than 5% by weight is not the same as admixing water and MGDA to form a solid binding agent as is presently claimed. Van den Brom et al. discloses spray drying only in the context of when the granulation step, i.e., mixing the builder with the co-ingredient, is performed by forming a slurry containing said builder and the co-ingredient. As discussed above, there is no disclosure that water is used as a co-ingredient. For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that Van den Brom et al. does not anticipate the presently claimed invention.

Likewise, Applicants submit Van den Brom et al. does not render the presently claimed invention obvious. As discussed above, Van den Brom et al. fails to teach or suggest all of the features of the presently claimed invention. Further, Applicants submit that the required compaction steps taught by Van den Brom et al. teach away from the solid binding agent which

hardens into a solid form in about 1 minute to about 2 hours as is presently claimed. That is, one of skill in the art would not have a reasonable expectation of success in forming a solid binding agent from a composition consisting of MGDA and water without the use of compression at high pressures, e.g., 3-30 kN/cm², based on the teachings of Van den Brom et al. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection.

Yamaguchi et al. (EP 0882786A)

The Office Action has rejected claims 1-25 and 31 under 35 U.S.C. §102/§103(a) over Yamaguchi et al. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Yamaguchi et al. teaches a high density powdered detergent composition comprising a glycine N,N-diacetic acid derivative, a nonionic surfactant, an anionic surfactant, and an aluminosilicate. Yamaguchi et al. does not teach a solid composition comprising a binding agent consisting of MGDA and water that hardens to a solid form in about 1 minute to about 2 hours. Although Yamaguchi et al. discloses forming aqueous slurries comprising MGDA among other ingredients, the detergent compositions of Yamaguchi et al. do not comprise a composition comprising a solid binding agent consisting of water and MGDA, as they are spray dried, i.e., the moisture is removed. Further, Yamaguchi et al. does not disclose compositions that harden to solid form within about 1 minute to about 2 hours, as the compositions are subjected to spray drying in order to form particles. Applicants submit therefore that Yamaguchi et al. does not anticipate the presently claimed invention. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection.

Applicants also submit that Yamaguchi et al. does not render the presently claimed invention obvious. As discussed above, Yamaguchi et al. does not teach or suggest a solid composition consisting of a solid binding agent comprising MGDA and water that hardens to a

solid form in about 1 minute to about 2 hours. Applicants submit that Yamaguchi et al. teaches away from the presently claimed invention, as Yamaguchi et al. relies on spray drying to achieve solid particles. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection.

Williams (US 6,162,259)

The Office Action has rejected claims 1-37 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Williams. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Williams is directed to a detergent that includes MGDA to aid in dissolution of a product and therefore helps in preventing deposit formation. Williams does not disclose a composition comprising a solid binding agent consisting of MGDA and water that hardens to form a solid in about 1 minute to about 2 hours. Nor does Williams disclose forming such a composition by admixing MGDA and water.

To the contrary, nowhere does Williams disclose that water is added to the detergent compositions. Williams only discloses in the Examples that the compositions comprise “Misc inc moisture to balance pH (1% solution).” The source of the miscellaneous ingredients, including moisture, is not disclosed by Williams. Therefore, the moisture present in Williams is not necessarily from water added to the composition, but may be from water associated with one or more of the other components of the compositions. Applicants respectfully submit that this does not teach a solid binding agent composition consisting of water and MGDA that hardens to form a solid in about 1 minute to about 2 hours. Therefore, the teachings of Williams do not anticipate the presently claimed invention. Accordingly, Applicants request withdrawal of this rejection.

As discussed above, Applicants submit that Williams does not teach or suggest each of the features of the presently claimed invention. Nor has the Office Action pointed to anything in the art generally that would suggest the presently claimed invention. Thus, Applicants submit Williams does not render the presently claimed invention obvious. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection.

Summary

It is respectfully submitted that each of the pending claims is in condition for allowance, and notification to that effect is kindly requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the Applicants' primary attorney-of-record, Anneliese S. Mayer, at (651) 795-5661, if it is believed that prosecution of this application may be assisted thereby.



Respectfully submitted,

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